WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1. A method comprising:

2   obtaining a set of locations in a storage area; and

3   performing an operation on first data in the set of locations in the storage area, wherein

4   the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,

5   the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and

6   the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1   2. The method of claim 1 wherein

2   the operation is replication.

1   3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

2   obtaining a set of entities, wherein

3   the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and

4   each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective

5   data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1   4. The method of claim 1 wherein

2   the set of locations is designated by a requester, and

3   the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1   5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:

2   obtaining a designation of the operation to be performed on the set of locations.

1   6. The method of claim 4 wherein

2   the requester manages data in the storage area.

1   7. The method of claim 4 wherein

2   the requester performs a management function of a set of management functions for the

3   storage area.

1   8. The method of claim 4 wherein

2   the requester identifies a respective physical location in the storage area corresponding to

3   each location of the set of locations.

1   9. The method of claim 4 wherein

2   each location in the set of locations comprises

3   a beginning location and

4   a number of contiguous locations starting at the beginning location.

1   10. The method of claim 4 wherein

2   the set of locations is a subset of a plurality of locations, and

3   the set of locations is designated by a set of indicators, wherein

4   the set of indicators comprises an indicator for each respective location of the

5   plurality of locations, and

6   each indicator of the set of indicators indicates whether the respective location for the

7   indicator is included in the set of locations.

1   11. The method of claim 4 further comprising:

2   obtaining a second set of locations; and

3   performing a second operation on the second set of locations after the first operation is

4   performed on the set of locations.

1   12. The method of claim 11 wherein

2   the set of locations and the second set of locations are designated by the requester; and

3   the operation and the second operation are designated by the requester.

1   13. The method of claim 4 wherein

2   a sieve for the storage area comprises the operation, and

3   each operation in the sieve is performed on the set of locations if the sieve is specified.

1   14. A system comprising:

2   obtaining means for obtaining a set of locations in a storage area; and

3   performing means for performing an operation on first data in the set of locations in the

4   storage area, wherein

5   the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,

6   the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and

7   the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1   15. The system of claim 14 further comprising:

2   second obtaining means for obtaining a set of entities, wherein

3   the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and

4   each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective

5   data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1   16. The system of claim 14 wherein

2   . the set of locations is designated by a requester, and

3   the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1   17. The system of claim 16 further comprising:

2   second obtaining means for obtaining a second set of locations; and

3   second performing means for performing a second operation on the second set of locations

4   after the first operation is performed on the set of locations.

1   18. A computer-readable medium comprising:

2   obtaining instructions configured to obtain a set of locations in a storage area; and

3   performing instructions configured to perform an operation on first data in the set of locations

4   in the storage area, wherein

5   the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,

6   the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and

7   the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1   19. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 further comprising:

2   second obtaining instructions configured to obtain a set of entities, wherein

3   the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and

4   each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective

5   data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1   20. The computer-readable medium of claim 18 wherein

2   the set of locations is designated by a requester, and

3   the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1   21. The computer-readable medium of claim 20 further comprising:

2   second obtaining instructions configured to obtain a second set of locations; and

3   second performing instructions configured to perform a second operation on the second set of

4   locations after the first operation is performed on the set of locations.

1   22. A computer system comprising:

2   a processor; and

3   the computer-readable medium of claim 18, wherein

4   the computer-readable medium is coupled to the processor.

1   23. A system comprising:

2   an obtaining module configured to obtain a set of locations in a storage area; and

3   a performing module configured to perform an operation on first data in the set of locations in

4   the storage area, wherein

5   the storage area comprises an unspecified location storing second data,

6   the unspecified location is not included in the set of locations, and

7   the second data are unaffected by the operation.

1   24. The system of claim 23 further comprising:

2   a second obtaining module configured to obtain a set of entities, wherein

3   the set of locations comprises a plurality of subsets of locations, and

4   each entity in the set of entities has permission to perform the operation on respective

5   data in at least one of the plurality of subsets of locations.

1   25. The system of claim 23 wherein

2   the set of locations is designated by a requester, and

3   the requester requests to perform the operation on the first data in the set of locations.

1   26. The system of claim 25 further comprising:

2   a second obtaining module configured to obtain a second set of locations; and

3   a second performing module configured to perform a second operation on the second set of

4   locations after the first operation is performed on the set of locations.